(c) if so, the salient points raised and the areas of agreement reached during these discussions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Both India and Australia welcomed the move by US to attempt a new security framework. Both sides also concurred that the Russians should be duly consulted before amending the ABM Treaty. The two sides further resolved to continue to discuss this matter along with other security-related issues, by setting up a new mechanism, the "India-Australia Strategic Dialogue" at the senior officials level, scheduled to hold its first meeting in August, 2001. The Dialogue will have Civilian and Military participation from both countries.

Indo-Pak Free Trading Agreement

3408. SHRI K.M. SAIFULLAH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken up with Pakistan for establishing Free Trading Agreement (FTA) on the lines of India, Sri Lanka (FTA) for greater trade investment flow and strengthening of economic relationship;

(b) if so, Government's response thereto; and

(c) if not, the action proposed in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) In his opening statement at the plenary of the India-Pakistan Summit in Agra on 15th July, 2001 Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee proposed that a group of experts of both countries be constituted to recommend measures to increase bilateral trade, economic and technical interaction between the two countries. Pakistan is yet to respond to this proposal.

Attorney General's Address to UN Sub-Commission

3409. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Attorney General of India had addressed the 7th session of the UN Sub-Commission work group on minorities;

(b) if so, what he had mentioned about acceptance of laws and regulation by the minorities; and

(c) whether Government agree to such view?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) Shri Soli J. Sorabjee, who is a member of the UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, in his capacity as an Independent Expert, addressed the Working Group on Minorities of the Sub-Commission, on May 16, 2001.

(b) Shri Sorabjee stated, inter alia, that the minorities must have a participatory role in administration, and a real voice in the process of making decisions and policies that affect minorities politically, economically or culturally. However, once a law or certain regulations have been passed by following democratic procedures, they must be accepted. Minorities must have a voice, but not a veto on legislation and other democratically implemented measures.

(c) The Government has taken note of the views expressed by Shri Soli J. Sorabjee in his capacity as an Independent Expert of Sub-Commission.

Chinese Delegation to Discuss Security Scenario

3410. SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether it is a fact that a Chinese delegation led by Shri Li Changchun, visited New Delhi to discuss the Security Scenario, in the context of the US proposal for a Nuclear Missile Defence, to provide a nuclear shield, while reducing nuclear arms;

(b) what other issues of bilateral, regional and international interest were discussed with the delegation; and

(c) the outcome thereof and follow up action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) Mr. Li Changchun, Member of the Politburo of the Chinese Communist Party and Party Secretary of Guangdong province, visited India from 12—18 May 2001, at the invitation of the External Affairs Minister. His visit was part of the continuing high level exchanges between India and China.